the Synagogue, but if he does turn his face towards the Synagogue there is no objection to it. There was once a man who prayed at the rear of a Synagogue and did not turn his face towards the Synagogue. Elijah passed by and appeared to him in the guise of an Arabian[18] merchant. He said to him: Are you standing with your back to your Master?[19] and drew his sword and slew him.

One of the scholars said to R. Bibi b. Abaye (some say: R. Bibi said to R. Nahman b. Isaac): What is the meaning of: When vileness is exalted among the sons of men?[20] He replied to him: These are the things of supreme importance[21] which nevertheless people neglect.[22] R. Johanan and R. Eliezer both interpret: As soon as a man needs the support of his fellow-creatures his face changes colour like the kerum, as it is said: 'As the kerum is to be reviled among the sons of men'. What is the 'kerum'? When R. Dimi came [from Palestine] he said: There is a bird in the coast towns[23] whose name is kerum, and as soon as the sun shines upon it it changes into several colours.[24] R. Ammi and R. Assi both say: [When a man needs the support of his fellow-beings] it is as if he were punished with two [opposite] punishments, with fire and water. For it is said: When Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads, we went through fire and through water.[25]

R. Helbo further said in the name of R. Huna: A man should always take special care about the afternoon-prayer. For even Elijah was favourably heard only while offering his afternoon-prayer. For it is said: And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening offering, that Elijah the prophet came near and said . . . Hear me, O Lord, hear me.[26] 'Hear me', that the fire may descend from heaven, and 'hear me', that they may not say it is the work of sorcery. R. Johanan says: [Special care should be taken] also about the evening-prayer. For it is said: Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Thee, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.[27] R. Nahman b. Isaac says: [Special care should be taken] also about the morning.prayer. For it is said: O Lord, in the morning shalt Thou hear my voice; in the morning will I order my prayer unto Thee, and will look forward.[28]

R. Helbo further said in the name of R. Huna: Whosoever partakes of the wedding meal of a bridegroom and does not felicitate him does violence to 'the five voices' mentioned in the verse: The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that say, Give thanks to the Lord of Hosts.[29] And if he does gladden him what is his reward? — R. Joshua b. Levi said: He is privileged to acquire [the knowledge of] the Torah which was given with five voices. For it is said: And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders[30] and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a horn . . . and when the voice of the horn waxed louder . . . Moses spoke and God answered him by a voice.[31] (This is not so![32] For it is written: And all the people perceived the thunderings?[33] — These voices were before the revelation of the Torah.) R. Abbahu says: It is as if he[34] had sacrificed a thanksgiving offering. For it is said: Even of them that bring offerings of thanksgiving into the house of the Lord.[35] R. Nahman b. Isaac says: It is as if he had restored one of the ruins of Jerusalem. For it is said: For I will cause the captivity of the land to return as at the first, saith the Lord.[36]

R. Helbo further said in the name of R. Huna: If one is filled with the fear of God his words are listened to. For it is said: The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole man.[37] What means, 'For this is the whole man'? — R. Eleazar says: The Holy One, blessed be He, says: The whole world was created for his sake only. R. Abba b. Kahana says: He is equal in value to the whole world. R. Simeon b. 'Azzai says (some say, R. Simon b. Zoma says): The whole world was created as a satellite for him.

R. Helbo further said in the name of R. Huna: If one knows that his friend is used to greet him, let him greet him first.[38] For it is said: Seek peace and pursue it.[39] And if his friend greets him and he does not return the greeting he is called a robber. For it is said: It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.[40]